

Political Parties

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What Is a Party?

- A political party is a group of persons who seek to control government through the winning of elections and the holding of public office.

Major Parties

- ◉ Republican
- ◉ Democratic
- ◉ Each Party is a coalition who have come together to get their candidates elected to public office. Each includes within its public ranks a substantial share of nearly every economic, racial, religious, regional, and ideological grouping that exists in this country.

What Do Parties Do?

- Parties are the major mechanisms that develop broad policy and leadership choices and that then present those options to the people.
- They are the vital link between the people and their government.
- They work to blunt conflict; they are “power brokers”. They bring conflicting groups together. They modify and compromise the contending views of different interests and groups, and so to help unify, rather than divide, the American people.

Major Function of a Political Party

- Major function is to nominate, or name, candidates for public office.
- The parties select candidates and then present them to the voters.

The Informer- Stimulator Function

- Parties inform the people and stimulate their interest and participation in public affairs.
- They try to inform and stimulate votes in several ways. They campaign for their candidates, take stands on issues, and criticize the candidates and stands of their opponents.
- It conducts its “educational” process through pamphlets, signs, buttons, and stickers; with advertisements in newspapers and magazine and on radio and television.

The “Seal of Approval” Function

- Grants seals of approval, to its candidates
- Serves as a “bonding agent” to ensure the good performance of its candidates and officeholders.
- In choosing its candidates, the party tries to see that they are men and women who are both qualified and of good character.
- The part also prompts successful candidates to perform well in office.

The Governmental Function

- Congress and the State legislatures are organized on party lines, and they conduct much of their business on a partisan basis.
- It is the parties that regularly provide the channels through which the two branches, executive and legislature, are able to work together.

The Watchdog Function

- ◉ Parties act as watch dogs over the conduct of the public's business.
- ◉ It criticizes the policies and behavior of the party out of power attempts to convince the voters that they should “throw the rascals out”, that the “outs” should become the “ins” and the “ins” the “outs”.